Uses of violence

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The threat of violence, and the occasional outbreak of real violence (which gives the threat credibility), are essential elements in conflict resolution not only in international, but also in national communities.[1] Individuals and groups, no less than nations, exploit the threat as an everyday matter. This fact induces flexibility and stability in democratic institutions and facilitates peaceful social change.

I refer not only to the police power of the state and the recognized right of self-defense, but also to private individual or group violence, whether purposive or futile, deliberate or desperate. Violence and the threat of violence, far from being meaningful only in international politics, is an underlying, tacit, recognized, and omnipresent fact of domestic life, of which democratic politics is sometimes only the shadow-play. It is the fact that instills dynamism to the structure and growth of the law, the settlement of disputes, the processes of accommodating interests, and that induces general respect for the verdict of the polls.

An effort by the state to obtain an absolute monopoly over violence, threatened or used on the behalf of private interests, leads inexorably to complete totalitarian repression of all activities and associations which may, however remotely, create a basis of anti-state action. A democratic system preserves the right of organized action by private groups, risking their implicit capability of violence. By intervening at the earliest possible point in private activities, the totalitarian state increases the chance that potential violence will have to be demonstrated before it is socially effective. On the other hand, by permitting a pluralistic basis for action, the democratic state permits potential violence to have a social effect with only token demonstration, thus assuring greater opportunities for peaceful political and social change. A democratic system has greater viability and stability; it is not forced, like the totalitarian, to create an infinite deterrent to all nonstate (and thus potentially anti-state) activities. The early Jeffersonians recognized this essential element of social change when they guaranteed the private right to keep and bear arms (Second Amendment). The possibility of a violent revolution once each generation acts as a powerful solvent of political rigidities, rendering such revolutions unnecessary.

The argument of this essay is that the risk of violence is necessary and useful in preserving national societies.[2] This specifically includes sporadic, uncontrolled, "irrational" violence in all of its forms. It is true that domestic violence, no less than interna-

[1] "Violence" is defined as direct or indirect action applied to restrain, injure, or destroy persons or property.

[2] The role of violence in political organizations is vividly demonstrated by a recent event among a group of elks at the Bronx Zoo. A 4-year-old bull elk, Teddy, had his magnificent antlers sawed off to one-inch stumps. He had reigned as undisputed boss of a herd of six cow

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tional violence, may become a self-generating vortex which destroys all values, inducing anarchy and chaos. However, efforts to prevent this by extreme measures only succeed in making totalitarian societies more liable to such collapses. Democracies assume the risk of such catastrophes, thereby making them less likely.

Violence has two inextricable aspects: its actual use (political demonstrations, self-immolation, suicide, crimes of passion, property, politics, etc.), or its potential use. The actual demonstration of violence must occur from time to time in order to give credibility to its threatened outbreak; thereby gaining efficacy for the threat as an instrument of social and political change. The two aspects, demonstration and threat, cannot be separated. The two merge imperceptibly into each other. If the capability of actual demonstration is not present, the threat will have little effect in inducing a willingness to bargain politically. In fact, such a threat may provoke "pre-emptive" counter-violence.

The "rational" goal of the threat of violence is an accommodation of interests, not the provocation of actual violence. Similarly, the "rational" goal of actual violence is demonstration of the will and capability of action, establishing a measure of the credibility of future threats, not the exhaustion of that capability in unlimited conflict.[3]

elks and one younger bull. But the breeding season was on, and he was becoming "a bit of a martinet." With his antlers off, he gets a new perspective on his authority and becomes a tolerable leader. A younger bull may try to take over as paramount leader of the herd, but if he does, the veterinarian will saw off his antlers, too (*New York Times*, September 26, 1962, p. 35).

[3] By "rational" here is meant: having a conceptual link to a given end, a logical or symbolic means-ends relationship which can be demonstrated to others or, if not demonstrable, is accepted by others (but not necessarily all) as proven.

Political Systems and Consensus

An investigation of the function of violence begins with an outline of concepts. We assume that all human relationships, both individual and institutional, are involved in a dynamic process of consensus and competition. These are opposites only as conceptual poles of a continuum. In real relationships, it is often difficult to distinguish objectively between the two. The distinction is sharp only subjectively, for the participant, and his perception of consensus or competition may change from moment to moment, depending on his political role and objective circumstances.[4] A political role is defined in terms of the many political systems in which the individual objectively or subjectively (by identification of interests) plays a part. A political system operates through a hierarchy of authority and values. Each system constitutes a complex structure of leadership and influence but, because of the nature of its task (maximizing and allocating certain values), decision-making power is usually vested in one or a few roles (the elite) at the top of a pyramid of authority relationships. Formal and informal political systems exist at all levels of group life (children's play groups, families, lodges, gangs, work groups, nation-states, international alignments, etc.), interpenetrating each other among and between levels. Each isolated system has an interdependent structure of roles, involving loyalty to certain values, symbols, leaders, and patterns of behavior according to system norms. The discrete individual, part of many different systems, must structure his own hierarchy of commitment to meet the simultaneous demands made upon him by many different roles.

[4] Essentially, the perception by an individual of his relationship to others within a framework of hostility or cooperation is the subjective basis of "ideology" (Mannheim, 1957, pp. 265–6).

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Within the individual, the conflicting demands of these roles create tension. Similarly, within each system there are conflicting values among members which are constantly adjusted as roles change, maintaining a state of tension. Political systems have an objective, dynamic interrelationship, structured into the hierarchy of macrosystems. Within the latter, each subsystem has a role much like that of the individual in smaller constellations. Each subsystem may be part of several macrosystems, imposing conflicting demands upon it. Consequently, within macrosystems there is maintained a state of constant tension between subsystems. This objective tension, existing on all levels, is seen subjectively in terms both of competition and consensus, depending on the comparative degrees of collaboration and conflict which exist in the situation at any given moment.

Any two or more systems may appear as hostile at any given time. From the viewpoint of the participants, the conceptual framework of competition overrides underlying consensus. Decisions and policies of the rival elites are rationalized in terms of hostility to the values and leaders of the other system. However, if events conspire to place a higher value on a hostile tactical situation involving the macrosystem of which both smaller systems are a part, their relationship will be transformed quickly to a conceptual framework of consensus which will override and mute the unresolved competitive elements. Such an event may also bring about internal leadership changes in both subsystems, if the elites were too firmly wedded to the requirements of the now-irrelevant competitive situation.

Objectively, tension is always present among all roles and systems; that is, there is always present both elements of competition and consensus. The subjective emphasis which each pole of the continuum receives depends on the value which the tactical situation places on acts and attitudes of hostility or collaboration among the various systems at various times. Degrees of hostility and collaboration are structured by a hierarchy of values within and among all roles and systems all the time. All are involved in a dynamic process.

Conflict, in functional terms, is the means of discovering consensus, of creating agreed terms of collaboration. Because of the individual's personal role in the macrosystem of nation-states, he tends to view the Cold War in terms of competition. Similarly, because of his role in the subsystem of the family, he tends to view family problems in terms of consensus (until the system breaks down completely).

One can reverse these conceptual fields. The Cold War can be viewed in terms of the large areas of consensus that exist between the two power blocs, for example, the wish to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons to each other's allies; the wish to avoid giving each other's allies the power of general war and peace between the main antagonists; the common interest in reducing accidental provocations; the common interest in establishing certain norms of predictability in each other's behavior; etc. Conflict can be considered merely as the means of perfecting these areas of consensus. In the same way, one can view the family situation negatively in terms of competition and hostility. As in an O'Neill drama, one would dwell on all of the things that divide the family members and interpret all actions in terms of maneuvers to subdue each other's will. Consensus becomes a residual category *hors de combat*, and therefore of no importance. One might dwell upon the collaborative aspects of international affairs or the disruptive aspects of family affairs. A policymaker should do both in the former area, just as a psychiatrist does both in the latter.

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The collaborative view of the Cold War should not, however, induce euphoria about the nature of the relationship (as it unfortunately does for some), since a high percentage of crimes of violence occur in families, or between lovers or ex-lovers (Frankel, 1938–39, pp. 687–8).

In performing this exercise, the relativistic nature of the concepts of consensus and competition becomes evident. It is impossible to reach any consensus without competition and every consensus, no matter how stable, is only provisional, since it represents for all of its members a submerging of other values. There is a constant effort by all collaborating individuals, groups, or nations to exploit any favorable opportunity to improve their roles or to impose a larger part of their own value structures upon a larger political system. In an important sense, all individuals, groups, or nations desire to "rule the world," but are constrained to collaborate with others on less desirable terms because of the objective limits of their own power.

The commitment required by a credible threat of violence, able to induce peaceable accommodation, is one of a very high order. Not all individuals nor all political systems are capable of credibly using the threat of violence in order to induce greater deference by others to their values. There is general recognition by all of the kinds of values which can and cannot elicit the high degree of commitment required to make the threat credible.

By and large, all violence has a rational aspect, for somebody, if not for the perpetrator. All acts of violence can be put to rational use, whether they are directed against others or against oneself. This is true because those who wish to apply the threat of violence in order to achieve a social or political bargaining posture are reluctant to pay the costs or take the uncertain risks of an actual demonstration of that threat. Many incoherent acts of violence are exploited by insurgent elites as a means of improving their roles or imposing a larger part of their values upon a greater political system. The greater the logical connection between the act and the ends sought, the easier it is to assimilate the act and claim it as a demonstration of the threat available to the insurgents if their demands are ignored. The rapidity with which insurgent movements create martyrs, often from the demise of hapless bystanders, and the reluctance of governments to give martyrs to the opposition, are evidence of this.

Nations, Laws, and Ballots

The nation is a highly organized, formal political system, whose structure is well defined by law and custom, reinforced by sanctions legally imposed by the police power of the state. The central problem of lawful societies is to develop principles, procedures, institutions, and expectations that create conditions of continuity and predictability in the lives of its members. The legal system is an abstract model of the society, designed to crystallize relationships of the status quo, maintain their continuity in the midst of political and social change, provide lawful methods of resisting or accommodating change. Law itself, however, tends to maintain the status quo and, with the instruments of state power, to resist change. But relationships in organized societies change anyway. The process for codifying changed conditions and relationships is called "politics." Formal political systems legitimize certain kinds of potential violence within controlled limits.[5] However, law almost

[5] The distinction between "violence" and "force" (one controlled, the other uncontrolled), was common in pre-Lasswellian literature. They are often difficult to distinguish objectively. Assessments of controllability may be almost en-

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never serves the interests of all equally. Rather, it protects some against others or gives advantages to some over others. By placing the violence of the state behind the interests of some, law serves to neutralize the potential violence behind the demands of others. In a sense, it thus raises the threshold of violence required to make social protests against the law efficacious. This fact guarantees that the law cannot be changed easily or quickly by any group, thus giving it greater permanence and stability.

Pressures for political and social change must be substantial before the threat of violence and the fear of the breakdown of law and order rises above the threshold set by the reserves of force held by the state. While the threat and fear remain below the threshold, the status quo often responds to challenges against the law by more severe enforcement, augmented police and enlarged prisons. Just as soon as the threat and fear near or cross the threshold, there is a general tendency toward nonenforcement of the law. The status quo interests begin to share with the disaffected groups a desire to evade and to change the law.

Private demonstrations of violence are illegal in all domestic societies. Toleration is accorded to threats of potential violence, however, to the extent that the laws and institutions are democratic. In all systems, the state must apply adequate force to control all outbreaks of actual violence by private sources. If the state power is not equal to a private threat, the government in power ceases to rule. The private threat of violence becomes in fact the last resort of authority in the system.[6] Why do governments fall when there is a general strike, or a street demonstration? Governments fall when their capabilities for dealing with threatened violence fail. The emerging political system which proves itself capable of raising a higher threshold of violence becomes *de facto* the highest authority, and *de jure* the new government.

Laws are not merely the rules of a game of economic and political competition. They can also be a means of winning the game, if some of the players can, as they do in fact, write the laws. The ideal system is one in which the rules are written with perfect dispassion, so that they accord no special advantages to anyone. This ideal is never realized. The process of politics which underlies the making and unmaking of laws is not dispassionate. Indeed, it is one of the most passionate of the affairs of men. No matter how scrupulously fair may be the original constitution and the representation of governing institutions, the tensions of political systems soon intrude historical hierarchies of advantage. Whomever enjoys early advantages in the game soon enjoys more by law, with the heightened threshold of the state to vouchsafe them.

Thus, the law tends always to become to some extent the instrument of the status

tirely ideological. I prefer to use "force" to designate the objective capabilities, i.e., the concrete means or instruments for violence.

[6] There are many areas outside the jurisdiction of formal governmental authority, as, for example, "off-limit" slum areas where police seldom penetrate, or the Mafia areas of Sicily. Such areas represent political subsystems which possess a high degree of sovereignty, tolerated, for one reason or another, by the general government. Within such areas, the *de facto* authority is often the elite able to maintain the highest threshold of potential violence, not the formal government. In such areas, there is usually an unwritten law making it a severely punished offense to call upon the authority of the general government.

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quo and an instrument for resisting change.

However, in democratic societies the law also guarantees the rights of voluntary association, political liberties, and restrains (by a constitutional distribution of authority) arbitrary use of the police power. These permit opponents of the status quo to establish and maintain a formidable base of political action. It is difficult for the regime to find legal pretexts for controlling this base while its potential for anti-state violence is still within the state's control capability. Once the insurgent capability of demonstrating violence is equal or greater than that of the state, there is no realistic prospect of repressing it. Changing the law gains precedence over enforcing it, even for status quo leaders, who wish to preserve what control remains over informal political systems whose elite they are. Once the process of peaceful political change has been successfully established, all political elites, both emerging and declining, have a high interest in maintaining general freedom to threaten violence without initiating or provoking it, either on the part of the state or by other groups. For the insurgent elites, there is usually more to be gained in preserving the continuity of the laws than in appealing to the uncertain results of violence.

In democratic systems, the ballot becomes the nonprovocative symbol by which the elites may measure their capabilities for threatening direct action. In a real sense, voting is an approximation of picking sides before a street fight. Once the sides are picked, the leaders are able to gauge their bargaining strengths and make the best possible deal for themselves and their cohorts. The appeal to actual battle is not only unnecessary, but also, for the weaker side (the only side with an interest in challenging the results of the count), does not promise to change the results, and may in fact undermine the authority of the polls as a method of reversing one's position in the future.

The threat of violence implicit in the counting of heads is an ambiguous measure of the power available to the political systems into which people group themselves at election time. The extent of voter commitment in these systems is uncertain and probably, in most cases, unequal to demands for supporting action. There are very few national elections in the United States, although many elsewhere, in which the results prefigure a plausible threat of civil war as the means by which the defeated candidates can gain concessions and appointments from the winning side. In general, democratic political leaders share a common interest in resolving disputes without invoking real violence. Neither side is confident that the loyalty of voters will stand the test of a demonstration of strength. Voting is a very imperfect register of loyalty, but rather conveys a miscellany of emotions, difficult to penetrate or to order rationally. Strenuous efforts are made by defeated candidates to restrain a show of violence by one's own followers. Public concessions of defeat, homiletic congratulations, and avowals of support for the winner, are designed to communicate to one's voters the finality of the verdict at the polls, which is subject to revision, not by a demonstration of violence, but by renewed peaceful efforts in the next election.

In 1960, after the close and somewhat questionable result of the Kennedy-Nixon election, what dangers could have been unleased if Nixon had publicly repudiated the poll and openly supported minority efforts to hold recounts in California and Illinois? In a situation of this kind, it is clear how close to the surface lies the threat of violence implicit in the voting process.

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The International Process

Many people blithely argue for law as a substitute for violence, as though there were a choice between the two. They call for international law and world government to eliminate war. This point of view reveals a blissful ignorance of the functions of violence in domestic legal systems. A viable system based on law protects the conditions of group action. Law always rests on violence. The threat of violence and the fear of the breakdown of law and order act to moderate demands and positions, thereby setting into peaceful motion the informal political processes of negotiation, concession, compromise, and agreement. Although there is no centralized police power in the international forum, the processes of mediation and negotiation operate in much the same way. The credible threat of violence in the hands of the nations has a similarly stabilizing effect, providing statesmen are attentive to maintaining their national capability for demonstrating violence, and providing their ambitions are commensurate to the bargaining position which their armaments achieve. More comprehensive legal codes and a world government may not improve the stability of the world community in any case, since the possibility of civil conflict exists in all political systems. Civil wars are frequently bloodier and more unforgiving than wars between sovereign nations.

In international politics, the threat of violence tends to create stability and maintain peace. Here the threat is more directly responsive to policy controls. The nation-state has greater continuity than the informal political systems that coalesce and dissolve in the course of domestic social change. The threat of violence can be asserted much more deliberately and can be demonstrated under full control, as in "good will" navy visits, army manuevers near a sensitive border, partial mobilization, etc. Because of the greater continuity of these macro-systems, the national leaders must strive to maintain the prestige of a nation's might and will. If the reputation of a nation's military power is allowed to tarnish, future bargaining power will be weakened. It may be forced to reestablish that prestige by invoking a test of arms, as a means of inducing greater respect for its position from other nations. All strong nations are anxious to demonstrate their military power peaceably in order that their prestige will afford them the bargaining power they deserve without a test of arms.

Because the threat of violence is a conscious instrument of national policy, it generally lacks the random character which violence has domestically. This means that if the armaments of nations fall out of balance, if the prestige of nations is no longer commensurate with their ambitions, if the will to take the risks of limited military conflicts is lacking, if domestic political considerations distort the national response to external threat, then the time becomes ripe for the outbreak of violence, escalating out of control.

In general, the dangers of escalating international conflict induce greater, not lesser, restraint on the part of national leaders in their relations with each other. Attempts to achieve infinite security for the nation are as self-defeating as such attempts are for domestic regimes.

The functioning of consensus and competition between nations is not fundamentally different from that of domestic politics. The most striking difference is that in domestic politics the level of centralized violence available to the state creates a high threshold of stability against the threats brought to bear within the system by private groups. In the international forum, the closest ap-

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proximation to such a threshold is the decentralized forces available to the Great Powers. A power interested in modifying the status quo must raise the level of its threat of violence, in order to induce other powers to choose between concessions to its demands or the costs and risks of an arms race. To the extent that the status quo powers are capable and willing to pay the costs and take the risks, their own levels can be raised, depriving the challenger of any political advantages from his investment. When all of the great powers are attentive to the equations of potential violence, no nation can hope to gain conclusive political advantages from an arms race. This situation makes possible international agreements for stabilizing arms and bringing about political settlements.

Diplomatic ceremonials, like the ceremonials of personal relations which we call "manners," serve to minimize the dangers of provocation and threat in the day-to-day relations between nations. Conversely, manners tend to minimize the dangers of provocation and threat in relations between people.

The Domestic Process

Underneath all of the norms of legal and institutional behavior in national societies lies the great beast, the people's capability for outraged, uncontrolled, bitter, and bloody violence. This is common to totalitarian as well as democratic societies. Any group whose interests are too flagrantly abused or ignored is a potential source of violent unrest. This fact is a major restraint against completely arbitrary government. Even totalitarian regimes can hope for stability only if they reflect the changing currents of political interest of the people and if they are willing to recruit new elites from the potentially disaffected groups which they rule. Even totalitarian states must purvey some concept of fairness and flexibility, an ability to change in response to the changing internal and external demands put upon it. In fact, to the extent that a totalitarian regime permits the threat of violence to be raised against it in the form of political pressure, it has ceased to be totalitarian and has become, for all substantive purposes, pluralistic. However, the dynamics of totalitarianism generally make this kind of evolution difficult, if not impossible. Dictatorships of one or a few raise the level of official terror to offset or deter the threat of violence from below. The terror and counter-terror may escalate until the whole system collapses in an orgy of violence. The prospects for raising anything but another such dictatorship out of the wreakage are remote. Dictators may seek an escape from this iron logic by external adventures which unite the country behind the leader, postponing issues of internal dissension.

The threat to carry political dissent outside peaceable channels can distract the government from the pursuit of other values, can impose upon the government as its first and major responsibility the establishment of domestic peace and order, and can force the government into shortsighted measures to suppress violence, which may widen the base of opposition and increase the occasions for anti-government protests.

The mere threat of private violence directed against the government has very great power over government actions. By causing reallocations of the resources of the society into the essentially negative goals of internal security, the opposition is in a position to defeat or cripple the positive goals whose accomplishment might legitimize and strengthen government authority. To avoid this predicament, even totalitarian governments may go out of their way to appease

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their critics. The alternative to reform is ruthless suppression not only of the sources of the threat, but also of every symptom of united social action. Bowling clubs, assemblies of three or more people on street corners—there is no rational way to identify the first links of the chain which leads to social action. All must be broken up, and every symptom, however innocuous, must be stamped out. The hopeless search for infinite security begins in this way and often ends with the downfall of the regime.

With this choice before it, it is easy to see why social and political reform are the preferred reactions to the threat of violence. This is why so many kings and tzars, rather than destroying their opposition, sent them on enforced vacations and educational tours abroad. In more recent cases, the State Department arranged scholarships in United States colleges for a number of leading anti-Yankee student agitators in Panama.

In democratic societies this sharp dilemma is avoided far short of infinite deterrence. The institutional distribution of authority (checks and balances, federalism, civil rights, etc.) precludes unilateral attempts to centralize all the police powers in the hands of one agent. Also, the law proscribes the overt threat of private violence and the existence of para-military forces, although it tolerates and protects the implicit threat of pluralistic political activities. Violence is demonstrated, not in organized forms, but rather in sporadic outbursts. Those disgruntled elites who possess a clear capability for causing a planned demonstration, i.e., they have organized groups with a deep sense of moral outrage and injustice, avoid incriminiating themselves and avoid provoking counteraction against themselves. Instead, they carry out "peaceable demonstrations" designed to reveal their numbers and the intensity of their commitment. These are likely to have the bonus effect of provoking violent action against them, causing government intervention, and/or causing their more inflammable followers to ignite into unplanned outbursts of violence. This potential exists implicitly in the situation.

The reformist leader is placed in a position of minimum risk and maximum effectiveness, that of playing the role of "responsible leader." He can bargain with formal authorities and with all the other members of the society in this way: "You must accept our just complaints and you must deal with us; otherwise, we will not be able to control our people." While playing this role, the reformist leader is not unhappy to have his prophesies fulfilled by a few psychotic teenagers. Events which demonstrate violence (and thus induce other elites to make concessions) do not have to be planned. Once the emotions of a real social movement are churned up, the problem is to keep them from happening.

The irresponsible elements are, of course, disowned, but the bargaining power of the responsible leaders is enhanced. In the bargaining process, the moderate leaders often accept concessions which fall short of those demanded by some of their more extremist followers. Opportunists or "realists" often inherit the benefits wrought by the blood of martyrs. This is a healthy mode of exploiting the demonstration of violence without condoning it, enabling compromises to be reached which isolate the extremists and render them less dangerous to the body politic. The bulk of followers in social movements will follow responsible leadership through the gives-and-takes of compromise, because they share the general fear of unlimited violence and counter-violence, with their unpredictable results and the defeat of all rational goals. Accommodations can be reached, even if only provisionally, which preserve the general

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consensus in maintaining the form and continuity of society and law.

Some Concrete Examples

Let us turn to some concrete examples of how this process works in practice.

A classical case of the actual demonstration of violence against the legality of existing authority is that of the founding of the state of Israel in 1949. The Irgun, an underground terror organization, created conditions in Palestine which made further British government occupation impossible. There is some doubt that the British government would have honored their commitment to the Jewish Agency or honored it when they did, had it not been for the Irgun's role. Yet it was the Jewish Agency, the responsible and moderate leadership, which negotiated the partition of Palestine and which played the major role in the founding of the new state, all the while disavowing the terrorist acts and methods of the Irgun. Before the launching of Irgunist terror, the British government stalled the Jewish Agency and accorded it little respect.

More instructive are cases of domestic violence where the actual demonstration is minimal and where the implicit threat is all, as in the current fight for Negro rights. Until the last decade, there has been little sustained pressure to improve the Southern Negro's position by governmental action. Even with the growth of Negro voting power in the big cities of the North, the Federal Administration has always shown great respect for the implicit capabilities of violence of well-organized White Supremacists. Partly because of the great power of the White South in the Congress, in Democratic National Conventions, and in the Electoral College, presidents have acted with restraint in protecting the rights of Southern Negroes. So long as the possibility of violence was asymmetrical, the Whites well-organized and armed, the Negroes apathetic, intimidated, and disorganized, Negro attempts to register to vote, to protest lynchings and other injustices, could easily be tranquillized by the County Sheriffs, the local police, and the KKK. In the last decade, the Negroes have been in the throes of a new self-consciousness, confidence, organization, and leadership. The Black Muslims, the Committee on Racial Equality, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, etc., have now demonstrated that the Southern Negro is capable of social action and of organized demonstrations of strength. As the capability grows for effective counter-violence against White Citizen Council provocation, or, what is more significant, nonviolent demonstrations which invoke violence by the extremist Whites, the Negro will gain increasing consideration for his demands, increasing support from "moderate" White leaders, and increasing attention and support from the Federal authorities. Just as the existence of the White Citizens Councils strengthened the hand of southern moderates in trying to restrain civil rights action from Washington, so the existence of the Black Muslims and Core now strengthen the position of the NAACP in seeking concessions from Southern Whites and action by the Justice Department. The threat of uncontrolled violent outbursts, hovering just beneath the surface, acts as a moderating influence, maintaining the institutions of peaceful process, inducing status quo groups to a greater readiness to yield some privileges, and restraining the responsible leaders of the insurgent Negroes from extremist demands.[7]

[7] The recent violence at Oxford, Mississippi, involving the registration of Negro James Meredith at the State University, is likely to expedite Negro integration throughout the South. By precipitating violence (which resulted in two

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The strategy of nonviolent social action (passive resistance or pacifism) does not abandon the threat of force as an instrument of social change. Rather, it is designed to operate within a civilized society by its provocative effects. By provoking the use of force by others, it forces the government to intervene on the behalf of the nonviolent demonstrators, while evoking the sympathies of those less intensely involved. As an international ideology, pacifism or unilateral nonviolence, may fail to achieve its objectives. Unless those who pursue it succeed in invoking some force in their behalf, they will be destroyed with impunity by their enemies.

The Douhabor Sons of Freedom (of Vancouver, British Columbia) have adopted a novel tactic of demonstrating violence as they conduct their immemorial campaign against compulsory public education. They set fire to their own homes and barns, standing by and watching the blaze. They also parade naked down the center of city streets. The significance of these demonstrations is plain. Their religion forbids them to threaten or use violence against others. Instead, they symbolically demonstrate their discipline and passionate commitment to their own way of life by inflicting violence upon their own property. The naked marches provoked arrests and imprisonment and the house-burnings forced the welfare agencies to provide temporary shelter. Both actions impose on the government responsibilities it is ill-prepared to carry out, especially if such demonstrations were to continue indefinitely and involve the entire Douhabor settlement. In addition, the demonstrations invoke public attention and sympathy for the believers. All of this may well give the local authorities incentive to ignore Douhabor defiance of school attendance laws. In fact, this is what has happened. Efforts to enforce the laws are spasmodic and half-hearted, while the law is generally evaded.

The relations of suicide and crime to social change are too large a subject for treatment here (Henry and Short, 1954, pp. 69–81). Durkheim studied these phenomena as an indicator or measure of social disorganization. They might be studied in terms of demonstrating violence as an instrument of political and social change. When teenagers commit crimes, the legitimate grievances which they have get more attention. When someone commits suicide, all those who may sense the circumstances that drove him to it reexamine their own lives, are strengthend in convictions concerning the society in which they live. A suicide of an over-extended installment buyer in Chicago led to efforts to reform state and national laws governing interest rates and collection of unpaid installment debts. A suicide, apart from its real motives, will be quickly exploited by those with a social cause. In effect, a suicide resembles a resignation from a government: it challenges values and institutions, evoking from all survivors a sense of the unresolved tensions which surround them, threatening the prospects for their own survival.[8] Suicides and crimes, however obscure and

deaths), the White Extremists may have strengthened the ranks of the Moderates. Fearing a recurrence, white leadership in future situations may be more concerned with controlling the firebrands than in using them to force concessions from the Justice Department. Gunnar Myrdal put his finger on this when he referred to the "positive" aspect of the riots. "The riots make people think," he declared (*New York Times*, October 4, 1962, p. 10).

[8] According to numerous press reports, the suicide of Marilyn Monroe led within a few days to a flurry of suicides by women. In the same manner, it may also have led to many decisions to live, which were not recorded.

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ambiguous, threaten the world and thus change it.

Some Concluding Remarks

There are several points that might be made in conclusion. Demonstrations of domestic violence serve to establish the intensity of commitment of members of the political system. The more intense the commitment, the greater the risks which the system will take in challenging the status quo. Accordingly, the greater will be the bargaining efficacy of future threats. Social change often occurs legalistically. Rationalization in terms of the continuity of abstract legal models is a useful means of stressing consensus over competition, adding to the stability of the whole society. However, it is obvious that a legal or ideological syllogism is meaningless except in terms of the emotional force which members of the society attach to the first principle. The infinite regress of syllogistic reasoning ends somewhere with a commitment of self. Such commitments cannot be explained or understood by reasoning alone. Efforts to adduce rational principles for explaining social and political change are futile unless one grapples with the often irrational and illogical intensity of self-commitment which marks social movements.

No system can hope to survive unless it can live with and adjust itself to the multitudinous threats of violence which are the basis of social change. Democracies have shown a greater ability to do this. However, this is not to rule out the possibility that, even within totalitarian forms, substantial democracy can be achieved. On the other hand, democratic forms can be subverted to become totalitarian in substance, if the search for infinite security in the international forum is reflected internally by the search for infinite deterrence of threats against the social and political status quo. Major social changes have major social causes; they are not the result of isolated conspiracies and plots. They cannot be arrested by an effort to stamp out all conspiracies and plots.

"Reason," as understood by Eighteenth Century Rationalists, Nineteenth Century Positivists, and Twentieth Century Pragmatists, plays an important role in conflict resolution as a means of gauging the possibilities of potential violence in bargaining situations. But conflicts cannot be resolved as merely legalistic, academic, or ideological abstractions. The dimensions of commitment and potential violence constitute the real substratum which give the myths of consensus reality.

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